AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1.   (Previously Presented) An image processing apparatus comprising:

an input unit for inputting original image data of an image composed of a plurality of pixels, each having a color data;

a storage unit for storing a first condition, wherein the first condition is met if a pixel is in a prescribed absolute position in the original image data and a second condition, wherein the second condition is met if a pixel is in a prescribed position relative to a target pixel in the original image data;

a selector for selecting a target pixel included in the image data irrespective of the first condition and also selecting at least one related pixel which satisfies the stored first condition and the stored second condition relative to the selected target pixel, such that the target pixel and the at least one related pixel are selected based on different conditions;

a binarization unit for binarizing the target pixel based upon a color data of the target pixel and that of the at least one related pixel to the target pixel in the image to generate a binarized value; and

a determination unit for determining whether or not the image has a specified pattern, based upon binarized values obtained by said binarization unit.

2.   (Original) The image processing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the binarization unit obtains a color data for binarization based upon the color data of the target pixel and that of the at least one related pixel, and generates the binarized value based upon whether or not the value indicated by the color data for binarization is within a predetermined range.

3.   (Original) The image processing apparatus according to claim 2, wherein the color data for binarization is obtained based upon an average value between the value of the color data of the target pixel and that of the at least one related pixel.

4.   (Original) The image processing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein every N pixel from a pixel at an edge of the image in a predetermined direction within the image is the pixel defined in the first condition, and a pixel which exists on a straight line including the target pixel extending in the predetermined direction and which is positioned within a predetermined range from the target pixel is the pixel defined in the second condition.

5.   (Original) The image processing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the storage unit stores a third condition defining a position relative to the target pixel in a predetermined direction specified by a user, and wherein the at least one related pixel includes a pixel satisfying the third condition.

6.   (Original) The image processing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the determination unit determines whether or not an image element having a shape similar to the specified pattern exists, based upon the binarized values, and

when the image element is determined to exist, finely examines the shape of the image element to determine whether or not the specified pattern exists.

7.   (Previously Presented) The image processing apparatus according to claim 6, wherein when the image element is determined to exist, the determination unit inhibits to generate an image resembling closely the image received from the input unit.

8.   (Previously Presented) A computer-readable recording medium for recording an image processing computer program comprising the steps of:

inputting image data of an image composed of a plurality of pixels, each having a color data;

reading from a storage a first condition, wherein the first condition is met if a pixel is in a prescribed absolute position in the original image data and a second condition, wherein the second condition is met if a pixel is in a prescribed position relative to a target pixel in the original image data;

selecting a target pixel included in the image data irrespective of the first condition;

selecting at least one related pixel which satisfies the read first condition and the read second condition relative to the selected target pixel, such that the target pixel and the at least one related pixel are selected based on different conditions;

binarizing the target pixel based upon a color data of the target pixel and that of at least one related pixel to the target pixel in the image to generate a binarized value; and

determining whether or not the image has a specified pattern, based upon the binarized values obtained.

9.   (Previously Presented) The computer-readable recording medium for recording an image processing computer program according to claim 8, wherein the step of generating the binarized value includes the steps of:

obtaining a color data for binarization based upon the color data of the target pixel and that of the at least one related pixel; and

generating the binarized value based upon whether or not the value indicated by the color data for binarization is within a predetermined range, and

wherein the color data for binarization is obtained based upon an average value between the value of the color data of the target pixel and that of the at least one related pixel.

10.   (Previously Presented) The computer-readable recording medium for recording an image processing computer program according to claim 8, wherein every N pixel from a pixel at an edge of the image in a predetermined direction within the image is the pixel defined in the first condition, and a pixel which exists on a straight line including the target pixel extending in the predetermined direction and which is positioned within a predetermined range from the target pixel is the pixel defined in the second condition.

11.   (Previously Presented) The computer-readable recording medium for recording an image processing computer program according to claim 8, wherein, in the step of storing, a third condition is stored, the third condition defining a position

relative to the target pixel in a the predetermined direction specified by a user, and wherein the at least one related pixel includes a pixel satisfying the third condition.

12.   (Currently Amended) An image processing method comprising the steps of:

inputting image data of an image composed of a plurality of pixels, each having a color data;

reading from a storage <u>unit</u> a first condition, wherein the first condition is met if a pixel is in a prescribed absolute position in the original image data and a second condition, wherein the second condition is met if a pixel is in a prescribed position relative to a target pixel in the original image data;

selecting a target pixel included in the image data irrespective of the first condition;

selecting at least one related pixel which satisfies the read first condition and the read second condition relative to the selected target pixel, such that the target pixel and the at least one related pixel are selected based on different conditions;

<u>using a processor to binarize</u> ~~binarizing~~ the target pixel based upon a color data of the target pixel and color that of at least one related pixel to the target pixel in the image to generate a binarized value; and

determining whether or not the image has a specified pattern based upon the binarized values obtained.

Claims 13-21 (Canceled).

22.   (Previously Presented) The image processing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the absolute positions are fixed with respect to an edge of the image.

23.   (Previously Presented) The computer-readable recording medium for recording an image processing computer program according to claim 8, wherein the absolute positions are fixed with respect to an edge of the image.

24.   (Previously Presented) The method of claim 12, wherein the absolute positions are fixed with respect to an edge of the image.